

Congregational Church
Riceville, Pa.

HABS No. Pa.-514

HABS
PA
20-Riceville,
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 5-Pennsylvania
Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey
Karl E. Morrison, District Officer
319 Marine Bank Building, Erie, Pennsylvania

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Riceville, Crawford County, Pennsylvania

Owner.

First Congregational Church.

Date of Erection

1859.

Architect

Dowd of Meadville, Pennsylvania.

Builder

Unknown.

Number of Stories:

Single story with unexcavated basement.

Materials of Construction:

White pine, fresco and plaster probably made on premises, white frosted glass.

Other Existing Records:

Day book belonging to Mr. Arthur Westgate in which record is made of purchase of materials used in construction of building. Personal interviews with three members of the Westgate family, Crawford County History.

Additional Data-Bibliography:

History of Crawford County, Pennsylvania, Chicago, Ill. Brown, Runk and Co., Publishers, 1890.

An illustrated History of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Egle, William H., M.D. Harrisburg, DeWitt C. Goodrich & Co. 1876. Crawford County.

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Riceville, Crawford County, Pennsylvania

The first Congregational Church of Riceville, Crawford County, Pennsylvania was organized March 27, 1858, the church building was erected in 1859 dedicated in 1863, and remodeled and repaired in 1875. In a day book belonging to Mr. Arthur Westgate of Riceville there are entries for window sash dated October 27, 1858, amount \$54.16, sash calling for nine lights of glase in each sash. There are other entries for doors and other materiale, all made in the Westgate sawmill at Riceville.

In 1875 the window eash were changed, a wooden strip dividing the length into two parts, or double panele, each having two saeh and two lights of white frosted glase. Bsnjamine Boles Westgate and Thomas Ferry were the largeet contributors to found thie church. Benjamine Bolee Westgate was born in Rhode Ieland, moved to Saratoga County, New York State. He moved from Saratoga County on the Eris Canal to end of eame at Buffalo. He came from thsre by boat to Erie, Pennsylvania, and from there by ox team to Centerville in 1838, from Centerville to Riceville 1839. Thomas Ferry came from Litchfield County, Connecticut. He sold a farm of one hundred acres and gave three hundred dollare to the founding of ths First Congregational Church.

The First Congregational Church of Riceville, Crawford County, Pennsylvania is ~~a beautiful architectural gem~~. It is situated on a wide lawn surrounded by trees and is built in the Greek revival style, 48' 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " long, 36' 10" wide and 22' high. The front elevation of the church shows a central doorway with two graceful windowe, one on each side spaced evenly between doorway and corners of the building.

The doorway is reached by a flight of four concrete steps to a platform about 3' wide, with slight rise to door sill. The door is flanked by two small Ionic style pilasters, ~~above~~ with cap resting thereon. Above them a wide plain wooden frieze embellished with dentil moulding, surmounted by a plain rounded moulding. Above this another plain frieze reaching to the cornice which is a duplicate in every detail of the doorway sntablature, plain with dentil moulding upheld with two larger Ionic pilasters spaced 1' 6" from doorway pilasters extending from siding 2'. Also two larger pilastere on each corner of the building. The height of the doorway pilasters is 11' 4" while the larger pilasters are 15' 6" cap 1' 6", the upper part of the pilaster and cap doweled to lower parts.

Double doors open inward, being of frosted glass about two thirds of the way. Each door has four lights of glass, with lower wooden part paneled by four panels. The hardware for the doors is a thumb latch and parts. The keystone of the windows is pointed. The basement is unexcavated, the walls are of creek and native sandstone, and are pierced by five window openings. In the basement six columns support the floor of the

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church. A suspended chimney is located about two thirds of the distance to the rear. The roof has a standing seam tin roof.

The church is surmounted by a bell tower and weather-vane. The tower has a square base with four pilasters, one at each corner, and a box cornice. The belfrey is octagonal, posts pentagonal doric influence cap $9\frac{1}{2}$ ' box cornice, space between posts elliptical arch, dome copper sheeting surmounted by pinnacle. Weather vane with arrow weather indicator. Slat's are on the bell tower.

The interior of the church has a small vestibule extending into the body of the church. Formerly two staircases, one at each end of the vestibule, led to the choir loft which was directly over the vestibule and extending to the sides of the church, enclosed by a railing. The church bell was rung from the lower floor of the vestibule. Two large square wooden posts just at the entrance into the body of the church near the vestibule support the entire roof. The church auditorium is almost square. The flooring is of white pine of random widths running six to eight inches. A matched wainscoting about thirty inches high of white pine grained a light color encircles the room. The pews are of white pine, grained to match wainscoting, and are of long and short lengths. The walls and ceiling are plastered, of hard finish or fresco in excellent condition. An interior cornice whose angle with the ceiling is curved almost 90 degrees is the only ornamentation.

The windows are equare, with wide architrave. There is a cornice around the vestibule top inside of the church with two rounded corners.

The pews have been removed and placed along the side of the walls. No special historic value. This might be used for historic and educational purposes, other than at present.

Annie S. Easter

Approved

Karl Morrison Dist. Off.
Oct. 5, 1936

HW

1/14/37